

THE DAY BOOK

N. D. COCHRAN
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

200 SO. PULASKI ST. CHICAGO, ILL.

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HUMAN NATURE.—(By N. D. Cochran).—One reason most newspapers are not human is because they try to be superhuman. Editors are always dealing with human nature as they think it ought to be, rather than as it actually is. That's why so few editorials are worth reading. They are even less interesting much of the time than sermons, in which we are told what we ought to be and know all the time that it isn't what we want to be.

We are all liars, of course, because we are always pretending to be better than we really are. We not only bluff and fourflush with our friends and acquaintances, but we do it with members of our own families. We want others to think we are "good"—whatever that is—and others want us to think they are "good"; yet each of us is trying to figure out just how much the other is lying. We know all of us are lying more or less, of course; and the game is to find out how much. And I sometimes wonder whether anybody actually knows what is good and what is evil or bad. Most of us understand that to be good is to be something we are not—something that requires effort, something that isn't quite comfortable and is generally inconvenient.

For about 1,900 years many of us have been trying to be Christians, yet I have never yet met one who

wholly succeeded in hitting the bullseye. Anyhow, not until he got very old and past wanting anything but rest. That's one of the "good" things about old age. It's easier then to be good, for one is past being anything else.

Understand, I don't know what being "good" really is. I am talking not about what each of us really wants to be, but about what we want the other fellow to be. And I sometimes wonder if we haven't got things all mixed up as to good and bad, and whether after all human nature itself isn't really good instead of bad.

Most of the laws which govern us are made by the ruling class and are intended to make us "be good." Yet the people who make them are not good according to their own laws. So the laws must be made for the people they rule. That would mean that most laws are made to make the poor be "good." That works out when you figure it out that most of the laws are for the protection of property. Certainly the poor haven't any property to be protected.

Even the laws to protect life are mostly laws to protect human life from violence—like murder, assault and other crimes against the person. We have plenty of law for protection against that kind of violation of the person. But it is very difficult to get laws passed protecting the lives of children from the murder of their souls and bodies by hard labor, or to protect working people from occupational disease or life-destroying working conditions.

It's much easier to enforce a law against stealing automobiles than to enforce one forbidding a Chicago department store working its employees in sub-basements.

I wonder if, after all, being good doesn't mean being obedient. The good slave, you know, is the one who obeys his master. Good subjects are the ones who obey their czar—and pay their taxes cheerfully and